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PREFACE

Honduras is a country with rugged and varied terrain, a predominantly rural aspect, and an Indo-Hispanic culture. Mountains, streams, beaches, and a wide variety of tropical vegetation provide spectacular scenery. Certain facilities, conveniences, and services are lacking or are less developed than in neighboring countries, but recent efforts have been made to improve economic and social circumstances. Schools, highways, and health centers have been built; electric power has been installed; and investments and diversification of exports have been encouraged. Tegucigalpa is taking on a new look because of extensive construction. An assignment to this small, pleasant Central American country should prove interesting and challenging.

Cover:
US Embassy, Tegucigalpa

This is the official post report prepared by the post. The information contained herein is directed to official US Government employees and their families. Any other information concerning the facts as set forth herein is to be regarded as unofficial information.

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The Host Country

AREA, GEOGRAPHY, AND CLIMATE

The Republic of Honduras is in the middle of five republics comprising the Central American Isthmus between Mexico and Panama. Roughly triangular in shape, the country has a 459-mile coastline to the north on the Caribbean and narrows in the south to 89 miles at the Gulf of Fonseca on the Pacific Ocean. It is bounded on the west by Guatemala, the southwest by El Salvador, and the east and southeast by Nicaragua.

Honduras has an estimated land area of 43,277 squre miles—slightly larger than Tennessee. Second largest of the five Central American republics, it ranks 14th in size among all Latin American nations. However, the population is concentrated in a smaller area. The northeastern part of the country (Mosquitia, consisting of the eastern portion of the Department of Colon, most of Olancho, and all of Gracias a Dios) is thinly inhabited. It has only 8.6% of the population though it comprises 44.5% of the entire national territory.

Honduras also has insular possessions, including the picturesque Bay Islands formed by the summit of a submerged mountain range. The Bay Islands—Roatan, Utila, Guanaja, Barbereta, Santa Elena, and Morat—form one of the 18 Departments of the country. Farther east lie the Swan Islands, now recognized by the US as Honduran territory. Here the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration carries on important high-altitude weather research under a cooperative program with the Honduran Government. Honduras only Pacific port, Amapala, is on Tiger Island in the Gulf of Fonseca. However, another port is under construction on the mainland.

Honduran topography is exceptionally rugged. The country is crossed from east to west by the Central American Cordillera making it the most mountainous of the five republics. The highest mountain peaks are in the southwest. Lowlands are the northern and eastern coastal plains, a narrow southern coastal plain, and the river valleys. The principal rivers are in the north and flow into the Caribbean. Although neither an accurate map nor an inventory of natural resources exists, government estimates list 63.6% of the land surface as mountainous and 34.4% as plains and valleys.

Geographically and commercially, the country consists of two general regions: highlands of the interior and southern Honduras and the tropical banana-producing north coast. Southern coastal lowlands are grouped with the highland region because of their economic dependence on Tegucigalpa, the capital, in the southwest central part of the country. Generally, the rugged topography and lack of surface transportation divide Honduras into numerous small, disconnected localities.

Tegucigalpa, in a mountain basin at about 3,200 feet, is surrounded by jutting peaks that reach over 6,000 feet. The city proper lies at the foot and on the slopes of Mount Picacho. It is 82 miles from the Gulf of Fonseca on the Pacific coast and 230 miles from the Caribbean to the north. Tegucigalpa and its twin city, Comayaguela, are separated by the Choluteca River. Seven bridges connect the two cities.

Its altitude gives Tegucigalpa a generally moderate climate. Excessively hot days do occur but are usually relieved by moderate to cool nights. Average monthly temperatures vary from 66°F in January to 74°F in May. Extreme temperatures as low as 44°F and as high as 90°F may be expected. Seasonal differences are not so much in temperature as in rainfall. The rainy season usually begins in mid-May and continues through the middle of December, with heavy rains ending about mid-September. North coast rains begin in October and end in May. Heavy rain may be expected once or twice a day—midmorning and early evening. Between rains, days are sunny and humid; dull, gray skies are unusual. You must take care to guard against mildew at this time of year.

The hot, dry season is uncomfortable and lasts from 3 to 6 months. It reaches its peak in April and continues until the first rains. During this time the earth becomes brown and parched and heavy dust hangs in the air. A lack of or a restriction of water through public facilities can be expected.

POPULATION

Honduras population (1980) is estimated at 3.5 million—about 82 persons per square mile. Actual population distribution is uneven. It is concentrated in a rough crescent beginning at the south coast, running through Tegucigalpa and Comayagua to San Pedro Sula, and then eastward along the north coast through Tela to La Ceiba. Tegucigalpa, including Comayaguela and the Central District, has a population of about 450,000. Beginning in 1950, migration to the city from the rural area caused the population to rise sharply. Other population centers are San Pedro Sula, Puerto Cortes, and La Ceiba on the north coast and Choluteca in the south.

The family is the basic social unit. Family ties extend to cousins, aunts, uncles, inlaws, and even godparents known as "compadres." Many families are large and often include representation from several social strata and different political affiliations. Roman Catholicism is the predominant religion.

Most Honduran Indians long ago were assimilated into an Hispano-American culture. Today more than 90% of the population is made up of mestizos, that is, a mixture of white and Indian. Some blacks live in the cities, but they consider their homes to be on the north coast and in the Bay

Islands, where most of them were born. Spanish is the official language. Many blacks of the north coast and most inhabitants of the Bay Islands speak an English dialect. A large colony of Catholic Palestinian emigrants are also active in commerce and trade. Many upper class Hondurans are American educated. In and around Tegucigalpa are about 1,000 Americans, many of whom are missionaries. Others are employed by various American firms and the US Government. A small European colony includes British, Germans, Italians, French, and Spanish. Until recently, Honduras did not try to attract the tourist trade, so Tegucigalpa is still not a major tourist center.

Although few Hondurans possess great wealth, a wide gap exists between upper and middle class groups and the poorer rural and urban populations. The middle class is growing in the population centers and consists principally of professionals, merchants, businesspersons, and government employees.

Honduras is largely an agricultural country. About 70% of the population depends on agriculture for a livelihood. Basic dietary staples are corn (usually prepared as tortillas), red beans, and rice. Meat and fresh vegetables are added to the diet as one progresses up the economic scale. The abundant bananas ("minimos") and plantains ("machos") are enjoyed by all social classes.

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

On December 4, 1972, a coup led by General Oswaldo Lopez Arellano, chief of the armed forces and ex-President, overthrew the democratically elected government of President Ramon E. Cruz. General Lopez, while maintaining his position in the Honduran military, assumed the title of Chief of State. He was removed from his position as Chief of State on April 22, 1975, and was replaced by Brig. General Juan Alberto Melgar Castro, who was succeeded in August 1978 by a three-member military junta, whose President is General Policarpo Paz. Under the military government, the final political arbiter in Honduras became the Superior Council, a group of about 28 colonels. It determined overall governmental policies.

On April 20, 1980, over 80% of the registered voters went to the polls in what most observers agreed were honest and representative elections and selected 71 Deputies for a Constituent Assembly to draft a Constitution. The Assembly, inaugurated on July 20, 1980, named General Paz as President of the Provisional Government and named seven Justices to the Supreme Court.

For administrative purposes, Honduras is divided into 18 Departments. The chief official of each Department is a Governor appointed by the President or Chief of State.

The two major political parties in Honduras are the National Party (PNH) and the Liberal Party (PLH). Both have roots in the conservative/liberal division which has dominated Central American politics since the early 1800s. Despite a history of bitter and often violent partisan clashes, both parties can be characterized as moderate in ideology and committed in principle to the democratic process of political change. In the 1971 elections, both presented civilian Presidential candidates who were accepted by most Hondurans. Nevertheless, the armed forces ousted the civilian government in 1972 after widespread unrest.

Two small parties, the Christian Democratic Party (PDCH) and the Innovation and Unity Party (PINU), are recognized legally and function freely. The Communist Party is not registered to participate in the electoral process.

ARTS, SCIENCE, AND EDUCATION

Tegucigalpa has three institutions of higher learning: Escuela Superior del Profesorado, which trains secondary school teachers; the National Autonomous University of Honduras, founded in 1847; and the private Jose Cecilio del Valle University, which recently opened. The National University has several faculties: law, medicine, economics, pharmacy, engineering, chemistry, and dentistry.

A University Extension Program has been established that accepts students who are not degree candidates but who wish to pursue studies in special interest courses, such as painting, archeology, and sculpture. A number of the professions have associations, such as the College of Pharmacy, Engineering Society, etc. These associations share in university government, control the issuing of professional licenses, and sometimes propose legislation. Relatively little scientific investigation and research is pursued.

The National School of Fine Arts and National School of Music train qualified students. These institutions are directed by the Office of Cultural and Artistic Affairs, which also includes a section for the preservation of folklore. The Cuadro Folklorico of Honduras has won several regional folk dancing competitions. It performs occasionally at various cultural events and is an enjoyable addition to any program. Nevertheless, aside from occasional visiting cultural presentations and the opportunity to take some courses, cultural events are limited and do not compare with those available in larger cities.

COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

Agriculture is the mainstay of the Honduran economy. Most farming is subsistence level except for the operations of the United Brands Company, Standard Fruit Company, several sugar plantations, and numerous independent coffee, sugarcane, tobacco, banana, cotton, and livestock producers.

Honduran forest resources are large. Pine grows abundantly in the temperate highlands and is the most common wood. Mahogany and other hardwoods are still found in the Olancho forests and on the north coastal range.

Within the past few years the fishing industry has attained commercial importance. Activity centers around the shrimp industry which catches, prepares, freezes, and ships for export as well as for the local market.

Honduras mineral resources are large and still not completely explored. Silver, lead, zinc, and small amounts of gold and cadmium are mined. Rosario Resources, a US company, is

the largest factor in the mining industry.

Manufacturing consists primarily of light consumer goods, including the production of beer, alcoholic beverages, and soft drinks; cigarettes, cigars, and matches; soap and detergents; lard and dairy products; textiles, clothing, and footwear; and pharmaceuticals and chemicals. Sizable expansion has also taken place in the production of cement, meatpacking, plastic products, and furniture and in petroleum products.

Principal exports are agricultural and forestry products and mineral commodities. Bananas are the leading export closely followed by coffee, which has undergone considerable expansion recently; lumber is third. Rock lobster, shrimp, meat, sugar, cotton, and tobacco exports are also significant. Imports are mainly manufactured goods, crude petroleum, and chemicals. Honduras major trading partner is the US, which accounts for 52% of its exports and about 42% of all imports.

TRANSPORTATION

Automobiles

A car is a necessity in Honduras, and a few families have two. To date, the Honduran Government permits you to import and/or purchase two duty-free vehicles. However, a current Honduran Government tendency to examine closely all duty-free privileges being granted indicates that there could be delays or difficulties in obtaining second car franchises. If you are thinking of bringing a second car, inform the Administrative Section in advance so that the franchise may be obtained before you ship an additional vehicle.

If you are bringing a car to post, notify the Joint Administrative Office (JAO) in advance regarding the make, year, model, color, horsepower, and serial and engine numbers of the vehicle you are shipping to Honduras. If possible, indicate port of embarkation. The JAO will request free entry, registration, and license plates from the Honduran Government. Cars need not be boxed for shipment, but remove all detachable accessories. Consider purchasing insurance in the US to cover all risks while the vehicle is in transit. You or an Embassy employee drive the cars from the port of entry to Tegucigalpa. Automobiles should be consigned the same way as household effects. (See GETTING TO THE POST.)

The Embassy requires third-party liability insurance on privately owned vehicles. You cannot register vehicles until you produce evidence that you have obtained liability insurance: $2,500 property liability and $2,500/$5,000 personal liability.

Compacts and other cars with good gas mileage are preferred because of the narrow downtown streets, city parking problems, and high gasoline prices. New American-made vehicles are generally not purchasable locally. However, limited repair service is available for Ford and Chevrolet vehicles, but parts are not always available. Ford parts have been more readily available locally, but the dealer will no longer import for sale beginning with the 1981 model year and will not stock parts. Because the roads are rough and unpaved, do not bring cars with low road clearance. Small, foreign cars are popular and obtainable locally (VWs, Datsuns, Toyotas, Mazdas, Hondas, and Daihatsus). They are economical to operate, more adaptable to local road conditions, and parts are more readily available.

Air-conditioned cars are not essential in Tegucigalpa, but during the hot, dusty season they make life more pleasant. They are also more comfortable when driving through tropical regions to other parts of the country or to neighboring countries.

All cars imported into Honduras should have heavy-duty shock absorbers and springs. Cars should have six-ply premium tires, preferably with tubes. Standard-grade tires deteriorate quickly, and tubeless tires develop slow leaks on the rough roads. Usually tires must be replaced at least once in a 2-year tour of duty. Bring at least two spare tires and other replacement items—windshield wipers, hubcaps, shock absorbers, a can of touchup paint, etc.

Honduran drivers licenses are required. The Embassy obtains them after you arrive. You can use a valid US license until the Honduran license is issued. However, under Honduran law, you must be 18 to drive.

Local

Individually operated microbuses ("busitos") provide service within Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula. Busfare in both cities is 15 centavos (7-½¢). No transfers are given, and often it is necessary to take several buses to a given destination. "Busitos" are overcrowded and generally not used by Embassy personnel. Taxi service is adequate in downtown areas of Tegucigalpa, but drivers usually pick up as many passengers as possible along the way. From downtown Tegucigalpa to the Embassy (about ¼ mile), taxis charge about 3 lempiras ($1.50) per person during the day and more at night. The major hotels and the airport in Tegucigalpa have a fleet of modern cabs that charge two or three times the normal taxi rate. None of the cabs are metered, so negotiate the fare first.

Regional

Rail service in Honduras is confined to the banana zone along the Caribbean coast where the Ferrocarril Nacional de Honduras travels from Puerto Cortes to Potrerillos (80 miles). The former Tela Railroad Company (recently nationalized) operates a narrow gage rail service between San Pedro Sula and Tela as well as between Santa Rita-Yoro-Progreso (about 200 miles). Standard Fruit operates between La Ceiba and San Geronimo (190 miles).

The American carrier, Air Florida, initiated daily flights between Tegucigalpa and Miami in late March 1980. In addition, the Honduran national airlines SAHSA and TAN have flights to and from Miami, New Orleans, Mexico City, Managua, Guatemala, and Panama. LANSA, another local airline, services the north coast cities and the Bay Islands. It has flights several times a week between Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula. AERO-SERVICIOS has a fleet of small single- and twin-engined craft that operates within the country on a charter basis. Small jets land in Tegucigalpa.

Of the 10,613 kms. of roads in Honduras, about 1,480 are paved. The road connecting the Pan American Highway with Tegucigalpa is being repaved. Driving time via paved

highway from Tegucigalpa to San Pedro Sula is about 4 hours, when the road is in good condition. Potholes are a constant hazard, particularly during the rainy season. Night driving is not recommended because of the hazards that may be encountered, such as animals and unlit vehicles.

Several new roads are being constructed or are in the planning stages. When political conditions permit, it is possible to drive over paved road to all of the neighboring Central American capitals. Such trips have been made by employees and dependents on weekends and holidays. It is possible to visit these capitals and other cities within Honduras by local buses, but these are rarely used by personnel since they are overcrowded and often need repair.

COMMUNICATIONS

Telephone and Telegraph

Telephone service is adequate. Obtaining a telephone in a new housing area may be difficult. It is not unusual to be without a telephone for as long as 1 year. Telephone installation costs $50, plus a $50 deposit. The monthly rate is $5 for 200 calls; 2½¢ is charged for each call after the first 200.

Telecommunications of Honduras (HONDUTEL) provides telephone service within Honduras and to other Central American countries. Service is good but slow. Telephone service to and within San Pedro Sula is difficult, but pending improvements should resolve this by early 1981. Long-distance calls within the country and to the US and several other countries can be made by direct dialing. Worldwide telephone service is available, and connections are usually good. Calls to the US are based on destination and vary from $2.40 a minute to the southern States to $3.60 to the west coast for day rates. Night rates are in effect from 6 pm to 4 am and on Sundays.

Honduras also has expensive cable service to all parts of the world. It costs 46¢ a word for a day message to Miami, New Orleans, and New York and 56¢ to the rest of the US. A night letter—21 words including name, address, and signature—is $5.06 to Miami, New Orleans, and New York and $6.16 to all other points in the US.

Mail and Pouch

Tegucigalpa has APO privileges for both letter and package mail. You can send or receive only parcels that fit into a standard mail sack. Parcels may weigh no more than 70 pounds, have a maximum length of not more than 48 inches, and maximum length and girth combined may not exceed 72 inches. You may also receive magazines and newspapers through the APO. Transit time for first-class mail is under 1 week; publications and large packages not sent PAL average 3-4 weeks. SAM and PAL packages are usually received within 2-3 weeks. You can buy US postage stamps through the commissary. Address APO mail:

Embassy Personnel:

Name
American Embassy—Honduras
APO Miami 34022

AID Personnel:

Name
USAID—Honduras
APO Miami 34022

Military Personnel:

Grade, Name, Social
Security Number
Organization (USDAO,
USMARSYGD, or USMILGP)
Honduras
APO Miami 34022

Local mail service is sometimes slow. Do not send packages through the local postal system. The post office does not always give notice that a package has been received. Also, it is difficult to clear packages through customs. Local postal rates to the US are as follows: airmail 9¢ for each 5 grams; surface 10¢ for each 20 grams. Airmail letters take from a few days to 2 weeks between Honduras and the US. Surface mail takes 4-5 weeks.

Since Tegucigalpa has APO facilities, do not use the air pouch facility to send personal mail except for prescription medicines, prescription eyeglasses, or orthopedic supplies to and from the Department. In addition, important documents such as bank drafts, wills, and deeds may be sent and received by air pouch. Magazines addressed by pouch will not be forwarded to post.

Radio and TV

Radio reception is satisfactory. Local programs are mostly music and news programs in Spanish. Several FM stereo stations broadcast music most of the day. You need a good shortwave radio to receive American stations and the Latin American services of the US and other international broadcasters.

Tegucigalpa has two color TV channels. Besides local talent shows and news, several US-produced programs are shown with Spanish dubbed in. In the afternoon, cartoons (some in English) are broadcast for children. Aside from its entertainment and information value, TV viewing is an excellent way to improve your Spanish. Occasionally, sports features such as the baseball World Series and the Olympics are shown via satellite TV. A number of employees own and are organized into two TV clubs, using videotape recorders (Beta format). Any US employee may joint after contributing 12 new Beta format (2-hour) tapes and monthly dues of $2.50. The variety of shows and movies is excellent.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

Spanish-language dailies are published in Tegucigalpa. No English-language newspapers are published in Honduras. You may subscribe to the *Miami Herald,* which usually arrives on the day of publication, and have it delivered to the office or home. A subscription is $25 a month. The *Wall Street Journal* is also delivered on the same day of publication. Mission offices have airmail subscriptions to the Sunday *New York Times* (which usually arrives on Wednesday), and copies are circulated among the staff. Private subscriptions cost $4 a copy. Overseas editions of *Time* and *Newsweek* are available at several newsstands at $1.10 per copy or are available on a mail-order subscription basis at a lesser rate. One bookstore in Tegucigalpa carries a good selection of paperbacks and US magazines. The Binational Center carries a good selection of US newspapers, magazines, and some technical journals.

HEALTH AND MEDICINE

Medical Facilities

A full-time State Department nurse is stationed in Tegucigalpa. She performs a full range of health room services. These include immunizations, emergency treatment, health counseling, and treatment of minor illness. The State Department regional medical officer (RMO) is based in Panama, the nearest approved medical facility for most illnesses. Personnel requiring surgery or additional diagnostic procedures usually are sent to Gorgas Hospital in Panama, but occasionally the RMO authorizes US facilities. Only emergency patients are hospitalized locally.

A number of local physicians have obtained medical training in the US and Europe. Two doctors act as Embassy medical advisers. Some local doctors speak English. Diagnostic facilities in general are not on a par with those in the US. Most physicians offices are inadequately equipped. Unless associated with a large clinic, they do not have laboratory or X-ray facilities in their buildings (including dentists offices). Most laboratory facilities do not have sophisticated equipment nor are there standards of values in testing.

Two hospitals used by foreigners are open 24 hours for emergencies. But the emergency room, although open, is not staffed—a doctor must be called. As mentioned previously, only emergency hospitalization is done locally. However, a number of Mission wives have chosen to have their babies locally. Two obstetricians and one pediatrician are American Board certified. Hospital nursing care is poor since few nurses are qualified.

One excellent ophthalmologist and a few optometrists are in Tegucigalpa. The ophthalmologist insists that you check back with him for correction if your glasses are made locally. Frequently the lenses are improperly ground. If you wear glasses, bring an extra pair.

Dental care is not adequate. If extensive dental work is required, have it done while on leave in the US. Have your dentist check your teeth prior to arrival at post. Orthodontia is a problem—the one qualified dentist no longer takes new cases nor does he see transfer patients.

Community Health

Environmental sanitation and community health controls are low in Tegucigalpa and Comayaguela. Water in both cities is highly contaminated. Take extreme caution in preparing drinking water: boil and filter all water. All residential areas where American personnel reside are serviced by adequate water and sewage systems. Sewage is dumped directly into the river that runs through the center of town. At the end of the dry season, both cities experience severe water shortages. At this time water must be stored, when possible, to allow for flushing toilets, laundry, and cleaning. Many of the newer residences have water storge tanks. However, unless these are equipped with an electric pump, they are useless when water pressure goes down.

Garbage is usually collected twice a week throughout the residential areas where Americans live. Use adequate precautions to minimize the cockroaches, mice, and rats which uncollected garbage attracts. The post has a program to fumigate employee residences semiannually. The municipal government has no active program for controlling insects, rodents, or stray dogs.

No government controls exist for slaughtering of animals for domestic consumption. Refrigeration of the meat from the slaughterhouse to the wholesale outlet is limited. The Health Unit should be consulted regarding the reliability of local brands of fresh milk and dairy products.

Main endemic health hazards are a variety of food and water-borne intestinal diseases of bacterial, viral, and parasitic origin. These include typhoid, infectious hepatitis, amoebas, intestinal worms, and various types of dysentery. The climate may cause many upper respiratory and allergy problems and sinus infections. In the Tegucigalpa area temperatures often vary greatly from morning to midday to evening. The rainy season brings the usual dampness, and during about 3 months of the dry season the dust hangs in the air.

Rabies is prevalent in Honduras and constitutes a serious health hazard, especially for children. Preexposure immunization with merieux inactivated rabies vaccine is recommended as a protective measure for all personnel and dependents. The Public Health Service recommends that pets also receive a yearly immunization against rabies.

You can combat the ever-present flies and mosquitoes by screening and spraying enclosed areas. Malaria is rarely contracted in the Tegucigalpa area but is prevalent in some outlying areas. When traveling outside Tegucigalpa, you must take a malaria suppressant. Take care to avoid infestation by ticks, fleas, and lice. Scorpions, tarantulas, black widow spiders, a poisonous variety of centipede, and rodents are occasionally seen in homes.

Preventive Measures

All water used for drinking, making ice cubes, brushing teeth, or washing fresh fruits and vegetables must be boiled for 20 minutes.

Pasteurized milk is available. Use only dairy products listed in the Mission health and medical information sheet. Before eating any fresh fruits and vegetables, wash them with tap water and soak in a solution of Clorox for 30 minutes. Cook locally purchased meats until well done.

Servants must have a medical examination before they are employed. This examination should include a chest X-ray, stool examination, and blood tests.

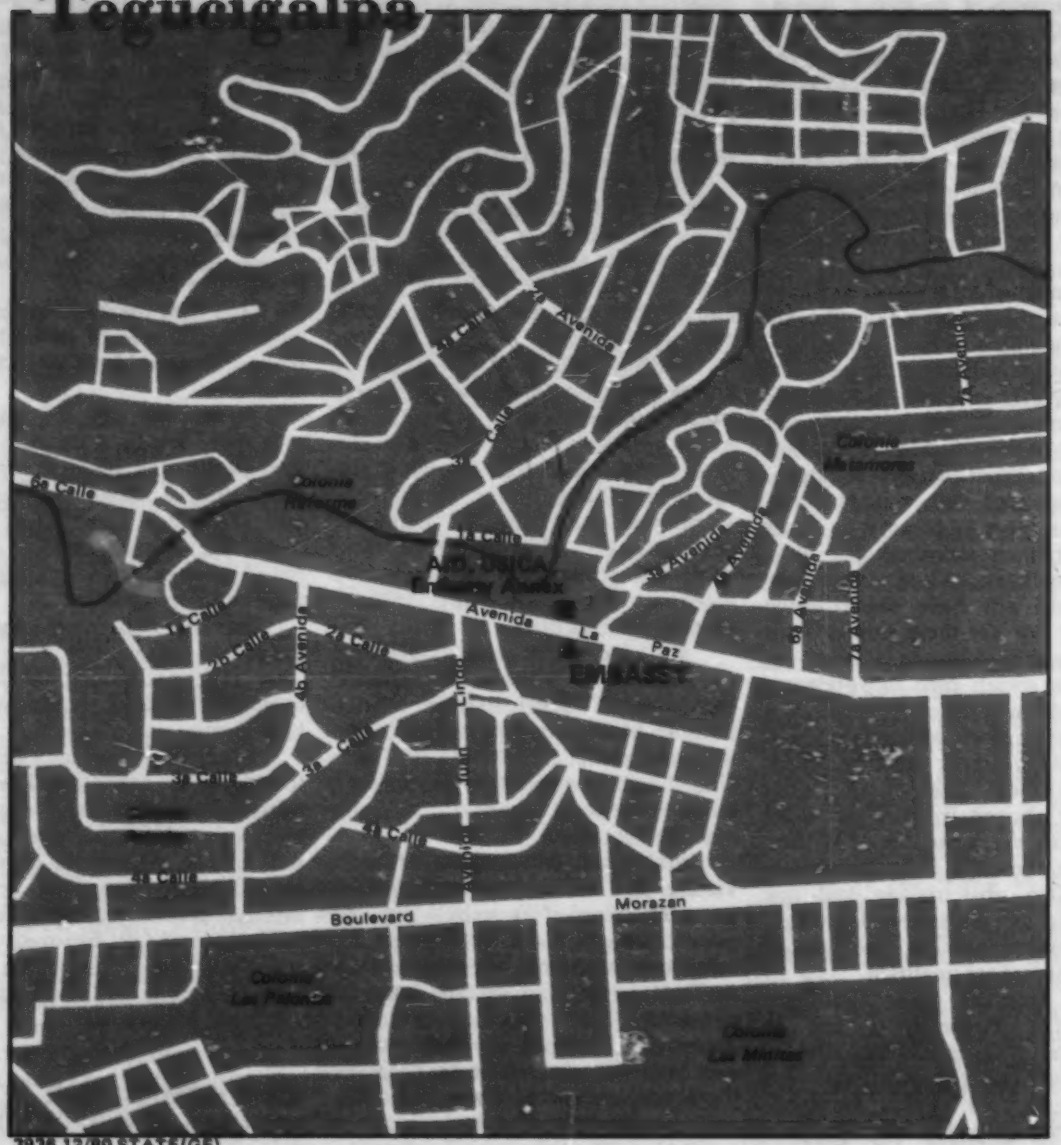
Pharmaceuticals may be obtained locally but are expensive. The Embassy nurse does stock a small supply of key medicines. If you need a special prescription, arrange to have periodic replacement supplies forwarded through pouch facilities. Drugs sold locally are of US, European, or Central American manufacture and are frequently out of stock and, when available, are expensive.

EMPLOYMENT FOR SPOUSES AND DEPENDENTS

Dependent employment opportunities are limited. Occasionally the Mission requires secretarial assistance, but this seldom exceeds 90 days. The American School welcomes and can usually employ qualified teachers. US firms offer little opportunity for employment since few are represented in Tegucigalpa.

READEX FICHE

Tegucigalpa



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American Embassy

TEGUCIGALPA

Tegucigalpa, capital of the Republic of Honduras, is in a mountain-ringed valley about 3,200 feet above sea level. During the rainy season and well into the dry season, the lovely mountains surrounding the city are covered with a dense, lush green forest. It is a provincial but picturesque city full of contrasts between the antique and the modern. At several points, streets of stairs connect one level of the city with another. At others, the city climbs the hillsides on terraces.

The predominant architectural style is Spanish colonial. The central part of the city is built around the traditional square. The narrow streets, the remaining cobblestones, the blank walls pierced now and then by heavy doors and iron-grilled windows, and the reddish tile roofs all add to the impression of architectural unity. But this unity is now being broken by the construction of new, modern buildings. Vestiges of former days contrast sharply with the new modern residential sections surrounding the old town.

The Spaniards founded Tegucigalpa in 1579 as a silver mining town with the imposing name of Real de Minas de San Miguel de TegusGalpa. In the Indian language this means hill or mountain of silver. In 1880 the capital of the republic was transferred from Comayagua to Tegucigalpa. Until 1898, Tegucigalpa and Comayaguela, a little settlement separated from the capital by the Choluteca River, were separate towns. The two were united in 1898 with the provision that each should retain its own municipal council. It was not until 1938 that they, together with other neighboring communities, were united to form the Central District.

THE POST AND ITS ADMINISTRATION

The US first established diplomatic relations with Honduras in 1838 when the Central American Federation dissolved. Relations between the two countries are regulated by a Treaty of Friendship, Commerce, and Consular Rights ratified in 1928. The Embassy, a modern building constructed in 1957, is on Avenida la Paz, about 5 minutes by car from downtown Tegucigalpa. The Embassy rents a seven-story office building directly across the street from the Chancery. The Annex houses the Consular Section, AID, and USICA. Other US agencies active in Honduras are Peace Corps, a US Military Assistance Group, and the Inter-American Geodetic Survey (IAGS). Post administration is under the concept of the Joint Administrative Service agreements for all US Government agencies represented in Honduras.

Antecedents of the present AID Mission date to the implementation of the Point Four Program until it was succeeded by USIA and, in 1961, by AID. A brief lull in the Mission's activity occurred shortly after the military coup or "golpe" in October 1963. But the program was resumed again in the spring of 1964. USAID gives primary attention to programs in agriculture, public administration, primary school education, and integrated health services. Other activities include family planning and export development with training as a significant element of all AID activities. Grants average about $7 million a year, and AID loans total about $80 million.

AID offices moved from the Chancery and several annexes in September 1977 to a new building directly across the street from the Chancery. Some technicians have offices in the various ministries. USICA offices and library also moved to the new office building near the Chancery in September 1977. The Binational Center is located in Comayaguela, twin city of Tegucigalpa.

The USMILGP is present in Honduras as authorized by the Military Assistance Agreement of 1954. Presently authorized four officers and four NCOs, USMILGP's mission is to direct the US military effort in Honduras, except for US attache matters. The principal objective of this program is to assist in the professionalization of the Honduran Armed Forces with specific emphasis on force development for the internal security of the country. The Headquarters and Army Section of the MILGP are at Las Torres, adjacent to Toncontin Airport. The Air Force Section is located on the Honduran Air Force Base at Toncontin Airport.

The US Army cartographic element of IAGS has been in Honduras since 1946 assisting the Honduran Government in mapping and general geodetic survey development. Currently, only one Department of the Army civilian, the cartographic representative, maintains an office in Honduras. It is in the headquarters of the Director General of Cartography in Comayaguela.

The Peace Corps has been active in Honduras since 1962 and has about 200 Volunteers stationed throughout the country. Peace Corps Volunteers serve in six sectors: educational, national resources, health, rural development, agriculture, and community services. The offices are located about ¼ mile from the Embassy on Avenida Republica de Chile.

Embassy switchboard numbers are 32-3121 through 32-3129. In addition to internal numbers, the Embassy also has direct lines to USICA, Peace Corps, and MILGROUP offices outside the building. Embassy office hours are 8 am to 4:30 pm (½ hour for lunch), Monday through Friday.

Most personnel arrive by air at Toncontin Airport. Keep the Joint Administrative Office informed of your arrival date, time, and name of carrier so that it can make hotel reservations and can meet you when you arrive. If you are not met, call the Embassy; a staff member will come to the airport

and escort you to the hotel. Honduran immigration and customs officials are helpful to personnel entering the country, and no problem will arise for newcomers.

HOUSING

Temporary Quarters

Arriving personnel usually stay near the Embassy at the modern Hotel Honduras Maya. Small apartments as well as rooms are available. Daily rates range from $36 to $45 for a single room to $55 for a double with special rates, including monthly rates for housekeeping apartments. Hotel facilities include a coffeeshop, dining room, and swimming pool. Pets are allowed in the apartment area. Several other adequate hotels are available and preferred by some personnel.

Two completely furnished guest quarters within walking distance of the Embassy are maintained. One is a four-bedroom house and the other is a four-bedroom apartment. Assignment to the guesthouses is based on family size and arrival date at post.

In addition to the above, AID leases and maintains two guest apartments within walking distance of the Mission.

The Embassy has a limited number of Welcome Kits available on loan to new arrivals until their air-freight arrives. They include bedding, linens, plastic dishes, flatware, coffeepot, and kitchen utensils.

Permanent Housing

The Ambassador occupies a government-owned residence which overlooks the city. It is a large, contemporary-style, rambling structure of native colored stone. Built in 1957-58, the residence has 22 rooms and is divided into 3 wings. One wing comprises five family and guest bedrooms and a family sitting room. Another wing has a garage, four servants rooms, laundry area, kitchen, and family dining room. The third wing has two stories: The lower level has an entrance hallway and recreation room; and the upper level has a salon, dining room, upstairs pantry, powder room, and library. The beautifully landscaped grounds cover 7 acres and include a 20′ x 40′ swimming pool and bathhouse. This residence has basic furnishings, including china, linens, crystal, flatware, other silverware, and kitchen equipment. It has a baby grand piano and stereo record player but no paintings or other wall decorations.

The DCM's residence is a two-story modern house in a new residential area built on the hills overlooking the city. It is completely fenced. The upper story contains four bedrooms, one bathroom with tub, two bathrooms with shower, one half-bath, a study, separate dining and living rooms, a large kitchen with refrigerator, freezer, and stoves, and laundry room with washer and dryer. The lower story has a double garage and servants quarters. This residence is fully carpeted and furnished and is stocked with a limited amount of china, linens, crystal, kitchen equipment, and flatware. It has a shortwave radio but no paintings, television, hi-fi, or other musical equipment and no swimming pool.

The Mission leases the following residences:

(1) The USAID Director's residence is located in a mountainous residential area overlooking the city of Tegucigalpa. It is a two-story house located on a hillside. The residence consists of a large reception/living room, medium-sized dining room, and a kitchen on one level, and four bedrooms on the top floor. The house has three- and one-half baths, a study, servants quarters, and garage. There is a front patio and large garden. The

Embassy residence, entrance and driveway

house is adequately furnished, including china, silver, and kitchen equipment.

(2) The PAO house is near the Embassy. It has a large living room, entry hall, dining room, modern kitchen, servants quarters, a two-car garage, and a large patio and garden which provide an excellent area for representational functions. Upstairs are four bedrooms, three bathrooms, and a family sitting room. Two bedrooms have terraces. The house is furnished with living room, dining room, and bedroom furniture, area rugs, drapes, gas stove, refrigerator, upright freezer, and washer and dryer. China and glassware are provided.

(3) The Defense attache's residence is a colonia close to the Embassy. It is a spacious dwelling on top of a hill with a beautiful view overlooking the city. It has a living room, dining room, den, family room, three bedrooms, two baths, kitchen, and servants quarters. The living room, dining room, and patio provide excellent areas for representational functions. A washer, dryer, two refrigerators, a freezer, and one set of bedroom furniture are also provided.

(4) The Embassy also leases the home of the MILGP Commander, the Marine NCOIC home, and the Marine House. These are provided with furnishings similar to those of State personnel. (See Furnishings).

Other personnel of all Agencies obtain housing on the open market under private leasing arrangements. The housing market in Tegucigalpa is erratic, so it may take from 1 week to 3 months to locate the type of house desired. A number of housing areas are near the Embassy. If you do not object to driving on mountain roads or through heavy traffic, you may rent on the outskirts of the city. Several new and attractive colonias have been constructed recently and one, El Hatillo/Picacho area (15-30-minute drive), is in the mountains.

Apartment buildings as known in the US are practially nonexistent. The average new house comes unfurnished and has living room, dining room, three bedrooms, two baths, kitchen, and servants quarters. Closet space usually is adequate. Houses are ranch style or two stories and most have attractive small patio areas or small gardens. Most houses have fences or walls around them. Depending on the size of the garden, you may need a gardener for 1-3 days a week. Many houses have entrances with French doors leading onto patios, and most have protective grills over the windows. Attractively designed, most residences lend themselves to hilly terrain. But their construction is poor and landlords are reluctant to make

DCM residence, entrance and driveway (left); Embassy residence swimming pool (below)

necessary repairs until a tenant moves out.

It is not necessary for single employees to share quarters.

Furnishings

State, AID, USICA, and Peace Corps employees have government-provided furniture (appliances only are provided to Defense Attache Office enlisted personnel). AID furniture is provided to AID direct-hire, contract, and PASA employees. Peace Corps staff furniture is of modern design. Single personnel have furniture for living room, dining room, and two bedrooms. Families are provided the number of bedrooms sets required plus one extra. The Mission provides heater, fan, two 9′ x 12′ rugs, foam rubber pillows, bedspreads, throw rugs, gas stove, refrigerator, freezer, washer, dryer, water filter, kitchen step stool, upright kitchen cabinet, step-on garbage can, ironing board, card table with four chairs, veranda furniture, and most gardening tools.

State and AID personnel usually must take the color scheme available since choice is limited. Both State and AID provide a $600 drapery allowance to defray the cost of material and local tailoring. Local selection is limited, so you may want to order drapery material from the US.

If you are allowed a full shipment of effects, bring enough furniture for a two- or three-bedroom house including refrigerator, butane gas stove, and washer. Do not bring fine antique furniture to post because handling by packers, shippers, and servants is not adequate. Because of dampness and mildew, do not bring fine books. When weight allowance permits, include pictures, radios, record players, tape recorders, small TVs, china, silver, glassware, kitchen utensils, linens (including electric blankets), books, and other individual items in your shipment. Persons with allergies should bring their own pillows.

Some personnel have had furniture (desks, cabinets, small tables, and bars) made locally to their satisfaction. Furniture refinishing is only fair, however, and workmen are often slow and expensive. Other imported items of furniture are available locally but are expensive. Radios, record players, and TVs are available locally at about three times US prices. Reupholstering is good and inexpensive by US standards if material is furnished.

Utilities and Equipment

All houses have running water, but some do not have hot water heaters. If they do, hot water connections sometimes are not made to the kitchen or laundry. Showerheads are sometimes equipped with individual electric heaters. **Use extreme care to prevent electric shock while showering.** All houses rented by Americans have toilets and showers, but few have bathtubs. Most houses have water storage tanks to cover periods of water shortages during the dry season.

Most dwellings lack sufficient electrical outlets and light fixtures. As in the US, electric current is 110v, 60-cycle, AC. Some houses have both 110v and 220v. Power failures are infrequent, but constant current fluctuation can damage radios, record players, tape recorders, and TVs. Electricity is expensive. Few homes have fireplaces. Families with babies or small children find it necessary to use electric heaters during the cooler hours of each day in November, December, and January. Because electricity is expensive, adults often wear an extra sweater or warm robe in the evenings and mornings instead of using heaters. Air-conditioning makes sleeping more comfortable in the lower areas of Tegucigalpa during the hot months. However, most employees do not have air-conditioners. If you bring a unit, bring one that is 208v, 60-cycle, AC.

You can order these and other items through Miami, if desired. Bring all electric appliances—irons, coffeepots, toasters, blenders, electric blankets, sewing machines, roasters, shavers, etc.—to post. These items are expensive on the open market. Bottled-gas stove and water heaters are used by most American personnel since they are less expensive than electric models. Delivery is excellent. A 100-pound tank costs $28, and the average couple or small family will use one or two a month.

Telephone service is fair. However, if you rent a house that does not have a telephone line already installed, it will be difficult to obtain one.

FOOD

The Embassy operates a commissary which all US Government personnel may join ($75 deposit for single members, $225 for families). The commissary stocks a limited assortment of basic canned and packaged foods, toilet articles, cleaning supplies, paper products, cheeses, butter, lunch meats, bacon, cigarettes, liquor, and occasionally, hams and turkeys. Baby foods are available on special order by caselots, as well as other special items, on an individual basis. The commissary also stocks one or two US beers and some soft drinks, at prices somewhat higher than in Washington, DC.

Pasteurized fresh milk is available locally as well as cheese, butter, eggs, cooking oil, and ice cream. You can buy locally bottled soft drinks and beer.

Good quality frying chickens are available. Fair to good quality beef, veal, ham, and pork can be obtained from several outlets. You can occasionally buy lamb and fillet in the commissary. However, cuts and taste often differ from US meats. Special beef fillet may be ordered from San Pedro Sula in a minimum amount of 30 pounds. Good frozen and fresh lobster tails, shrimp, and other fish in season are available, but prices are high. Several supermarkets carry a fluctuating supply of local and imported food items and local meats. Items imported from the US are expensive due to the high costs of transportation and import duties.

Fresh fruits and vegetables are available throughout the year, but supplies vary with the season. Locally grown vegetables include tomatoes, carrots, string beans, corn, eggplant, lettuce, and avocados. Good oranges, bananas, limes, and pineapples are available all year. Other fruits may be found in season. Peaches, pears, apples, and grapes are imported and are expensive.

PAO residence (top); commissary (above left); terrace, DCM residence (above right); American School (above)

CLOTHING

Clothing similar to that worn in Washington, DC, during the summer is suitable for most of the year in Tegucigalpa. Bring a complete wardrobe for a 2-year tour to post, since local selection is limited and expensive. Accessories such as hosiery, underwear, etc., may be ordered via APO. Tegucigalpa's weather is tropical by day and cool in the early morning and evening, except during the cool season (mid-November to February) when it is chilly during the day.

Women. Bring a good supply of light-weight, drip-dry synthetic and cotton clothes for the hot, dry season (mid-February to May) and the rainy season (May to mid-November). During the cool season (mid-November to February), you may use long-sleeved synthetic knits, light-weight wools, sweaters, jackets, a light-weight or all-weather coat, and a fur stole. Include short and long dresses, separates, and sports clothes in your wardrobe.

Honduran women generally wear the latest American and European fashions. Long skirts, dresses, and dressy pantsuits are now favored for receptions and cocktail parties. Regardless of the function, women usually wear long dresses in the evening. Tegucigalpa is an informal post, but it is necessary to include a selection of daytime and evening clothes. Senior officials will need a larger wardrobe for their varied social life.

Women who wear a size 7 or larger shoe or who have narrow feet should bring enough shoes for the entire tour. Rainy weather and unpaved streets are hard on shoes. Bring a supply of sport shoes and boots for picnics and hiking, as well as sandals for sportswear. Bring a good supply of lingerie, hose, or pantyhose since sizes are limited and quality is poor. Remember, you can also order these items via APO. Good quality imported items are expensive. Hats and gloves are seldom worn. No head covering is required in any church.

Men. Tropical worsted, dacron, and light-weight, drip-dry knit suits are recommended. One or two light-weight woolen suits or slacks with sports jackets are comfortable for cooler months. Bring a 2-year supply of cotton underwear and shoes and socks to post. Black-tie functions are rare. A good supply of sports clothes and informal clothing is recommended.

Locally manufactured shirts (some well-known US brands) are comparable to those made in the US and cost about the same. Many men purchase "guayaberas," locally made, loose-fitting shirts, which are frequently worn at casual gatherings.

Children. Purchase enough clothing and shoes before coming to post or order from the US as needed. Local prices for imported children's wear are high and selection is limited. Children will need washable synthetic or cotton clothing most of the year with a good supply of sweaters and jackets for cool months. Bring light-weight raincoats and rain footwear.

Boys attending the American School in grades 1-6 wear jeans, white short-sleeved shirts, and dark socks. There is no prescribed uniform for kindergarten children. Boys in grades 7-12 wear uniform pants made here, white short-sleeved shirts and dark socks. Girls in all grades wear white short-sleeved blouses, jumpers (which are made here), and white knee-length socks. Bring cotton underpants for all family members.

SUPPLIES AND SERVICES

Supplies

Toiletries, cosmetics, and feminine personal supplies are available locally, but choice is limited. You may purchase household supplies for the kitchen, cleaning, and repairs as well as gardening equipment locally. Prices of these items are higher than in the US. Mail-order houses in the US will send orders via APO.

Include the following items in your household effects shipment or arrange to have them sent at a later date:

Shower curtains and rings; bathroom accessories; picnic supplies (grills, ice chests, and hampers); closet fittings (clothes hangers and garment bags); dishpans, drainers, and mats; wastebaskets; metal water bucket; party favors and decorations; gift wrappings and ribbons, greeting cards; small tools; favorite brands of cosmetics and perfume; sewing material and sewing kits; Christmas decorations (artificial trees are suggested); candles (all sizes); drapery and picture hooks; playing cards, score pads, tallies, and table covers; ashtrays and vases; and juice pitchers and inexpensive water glasses.

Basic Services

Local shops are open daily from 8 am to noon and 2 pm to 6 pm and Saturdays from 8 am to noon.

Tailors and dressmakers are available in Tegucigalpa. They are not expensive, but most make only simple clothes. Some US patterns are available, and a wide variety of material is available in all price ranges.

Drycleaning is available but not always satisfactory. Shoe repair is satisfactory. Beauty and barber shops offer adequate service. Often operators are not professionally trained, and sanitary precautions are not as strict as in the US. Many women take their own favorite shampoo, rinse, lotions, and spray with them to the shop since such imported items may not be available. If you prefer a particular brand of color rinse or permanent hair coloring, bring a supply to post.

Repairs for radios, record players, tape recorders, TVs, and household appliances are available. Good plumbers, electricians, and carpenters are in short supply. Few workmen are well trained or skilled. Repair of delicate equipment should not be attempted. Auto repair is available. Service is better on cars purchased locally from a dealer who provides the service. VW, Daihatsu, Mercedes, BMW, Mazda, Chevrolet, Datsun, Toyota, and Ford have local dealers. Automatic transmission is often not satisfactory. You may purchase automobile tires and batteries locally at higher than US prices.

Domestic Help

Usually you need to employ at least one servant who does cleaning, washing, ironing, some cooking, and also provides protection. Large families and persons with extensive entertainment responsibilities hire additional household help as well as a

part-time gardener and the services of neighborhood watchmen.

All servants should have a physical examination. Ask to see your servant's current health card. In most cases it is wise for you to obtain a complete physical exam for your servant, at your expense. Check all character references from previous employers carefully to make sure all servants have the prescribed official identification. Conditions under which full-time servants are employed are governed by the Honduran Labor Code. The Code tends to favor the employee rather than the employer.

Even though previously employed by Americans, all servants require close supervision and training. Turnover is usually high, and their proficiency is not top quality. Most servants speak Spanish. However, servants from the north coast speak English and usually receive higher wages.

Depending on family size, experience, and duties, a full-time servant receives from $40 to $65 a month. Most servants live in and eat whatever the employer eats. The employer provides uniforms and furnishes quarters, including bedding and linens. The employer does not contribute to the Honduran Social Security System but is responsible for paying certain medical expenses. Employers are also expected to pay Christmas gratuities and give presents. Some female servants have their children with them, and the employer provides food for them as well.

RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

Most faiths are represented in Tegucigalpa. English-speaking Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish services are available, but not Eastern Orthodox. Tegucigalpa has a number of Catholic Missions and Protestant Missions representing the Seventh-Day Adventists, Assembly of God, Central American Mission, Conservative Baptist, Four-Square Gospel, Jehovah's Witness, Mennonites, Lutheran, Mormon, Southern Baptist, and World Gospel Mission. The American community is also served by the Union Church, a nonsectarian church. It is located in Colonia Las Lomas. An Episcopal Church is in Comayaguela.

Most Hondurans are Roman Catholic. Highlights of the religious calendar in Tegucigalpa are Christmas and Semana Santa (Holy Week). Christmas week through New Year's Eve is celebrated with much gaiety and fireworks. Holy Week is rigorously observed. Most stores and all government offices remain closed from Wednesday through Sunday, and vehicular traffic on Good Friday is minimal. Honduran Catholics celebrate February 2 and 3 as feast days of the Patron Saint of Honduras, Our Lady of Suyapa.

EDUCATION

Dependent Education

At Post. The largest school in Tegucigalpa offering a US curriculum is the American School, a private institution organized under Honduran law. An elected school board which includes US members administers the school. The Academia Los Pinares, administered by a board of missionaries, is in El Hatillo, about 20 minutes from downtown Tegucigalpa. It also offers a US curriculum. Elvel School has several private kindergartens and regular classes through grade 6. The Binational Center has morning kindergarten classes.

Many US children attend the American School in grades K-8. Most parents send older children to schools in the US. Instruction is provided from kindergarten through grade 12. Present school enrollment is 1,040. US children comprise about 13% of the students, and the remainder are Hondurans, with a few students from other countries. With the assistance of State Department grants, the school is making progress in upgrading teaching professionalism and improving its classroom facilities. The school is located in a new residental zone.

Classes are conducted in English, but 1 hour of Spanish instruction a day is provided. The school follows the US curriculum through primary school (grade 6). Afterwards, the students may choose from two curricula; one designed to prepare students to enter US colleges; the other planned to prepare students for the national University of Honduras. The school is accredited by the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges. Extracurricular activities include plays, cultural displays, sports, Girl Scouts, and Brownies. The school also has a parent-teacher organization.

The school year begins in September and ends in June. Tuition and fees for the 1980-81 school year were about $900 for elementary school (grades kindergarten through 6) and $955 for secondary school (grades 7 to 12). A school uniform is required. Materials for the uniform can be purchased locally.

Write in advance to register your children. The address is American School, c/o American Embassy, Tegucigalpa, DC, Honduras.

Away From Post. Because of the post's proximity to the US, educational facilities elsewhere in Central America and Mexico are not used by Mission personnel.

Parents with high school-age children may wish to consider arranging for schooling in the US because of the scarcity of extracurricular activities and almost complete lack of recreational facilities available at reasonable cost.

Special Educational Opportunities

The University of Honduras offers limited facilities for college-age students and adults. All classes are taught in Spanish. Advanced study is usually undertaken abroad. French-language lessons are given at the Alliance Francaise under the auspices of the French Embassy. The Alliance offers an excellent curriculum from beginning to advanced studies.

It is also possible to take lessons on the guitar and marimba, the two most popular local instruments.

Post Orientation Program

An orientation program is given about twice yearly. You are also given detailed orientation by the Personnel Office within the first few days after you arrive and are provided with a post Welcome Kit.

The Embassy conducts an active

Spanish-language training program, and you are encouraged to participate. Spouses are included in the classes on a space-available basis.

RECREATION AND SOCIAL LIFE

Sports

Horseback riding is popular and may be enjoyed throughout the year in Tegucigalpa. You may purchase horses for $50 to $100 and saddles for as little as $25, but costs are generally higher. The Saddle Club operates a small stable near the Embassy. Monthly dues of $50 for members pay for feed, utilities, rent, and hired help. The club organizes rides on weekends, and riding and jumping lessons are given.

The rugged hills around Tegucigalpa offer excellent opportunities for avid hikers. Picacho Park has a botanical garden and much open play space for children. It is crowded on weekends and Honduran holidays. Tegucigalpa has no zoological or "preserve" parks or playgrounds. Scuba diving and snorkeling are fantastic on the Bay Islands.

Amateur archeologists may be interested in the Mayan ruins scattered throughout the country. All archeological relics are the property of the state, and exportation is prohibited by Honduran law and a treaty with the US.

Bring all sporting equipment and special clothing to post because selection is limited and prices are prohibitive.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Places of Interest in and Near Tegucigalpa. The Presidential Palace is a beautiful old building situated above the river. Near the palace is the new, modern Congress Building. A stroll through its columned patio area is interesting. A drive or walk up the cobblestone streets to the old La Leona section of the city will bring you to La Leona Park with its lovely view of Tegucigalpa. In this area you will find a few colonial-style homes. Concordia Park is a small, popular park which has replicas of the Copan ruins. By driving to the top of the highest peak overlooking the city, you can visit the extensive Picacho Park. It includes a zoo, fish hatchery, botanical garden, and a large, well-equipped playground for children.

The National Cathedral of San Miguel was begun in 1756 and consecrated in 1782. One of the oldest pieces in the church is the stone baptismal font. As you enter the valley of Tegucigalpa, you will see Suyapa Church and Basilica etched against hills to the east. This basilica, now under construction, will be the future home of the Patron Saint of Honduras, the Virgin of Suyapa. Construction began in 1732 on the Dolores Church, perhaps the oldest church in Tegucigalpa. Across the street is Dolores Market, a place to visit and enjoy the flower vendors who open shop early in the morning on the sidewalks around the church.

Places of Interest 1 to 2 Hours Away by Car From Tegucigalpa. The Pan American Agricultural School at Zamorano is about 25 miles from Tegucigalpa over a mountainous, paved road. The school grounds are beautiful and well kept, and the colonial-style architecture of the buildings is attractive. San Antonio de Oriente is a picturesque mining town which is the birthplace of the well-known Honduran primitive painter, Juan Antonio Velasquez. It is a morning's hike each way or you can go on horseback. Valle de Angeles is about a 30-minute drive over a paved road. The road winds through hills of the quaint village where the Alliance for Progress arts and crafts center is located.

Santa Lucia, in the same area as Valle de Angeles, is a tiny silver mining town perched on top of one of the many hills that surround Tegucigalpa. The age of the principal church in Santa Lucia is unknown. But a wooden plaque dated 1598 was found in the old building. Parque Aurora, a lovely park off the north road, has a lake for rowing, a well-maintained picnic area, swimming, roller-skating rink, miniature golf, and playground equipment. Comayagua, the colonial capital of Honduras, is in a broad valley. It is a 1½-hour drive on a paved road. Comayagua's cathedral, built over 400 years ago, is one of the most beautiful in Central America.

Lake Yojoa, the largest lake in Honduras, is about 2½ hours from Tegucigalpa. A new motel has been built on the lake, which has good fishing. Cedeno and Choluteca are reached by a paved road—the spur which connects Tegucigalpa with the Pan American Highway on the south coast. A dirt road leads to the bathing beach of Cedeno on the Gulf of Fonesca, southwest of Choluteca.

Other Interesting Places in Honduras. The country's cultural heritage includes the remains of one of the great centers of pre-Columbian civilization in America—the Mayan center of Copan. This Mayan center rose and mysteriously declined seven centuries before Columbus set foot on Honduran soil. Since they were discovered in 1893, the ruins of Copan have been explored, excavated, and studied by some of the world's leading archeologists. Copan, one of the greatest of the ceremonial centers of temple cities of a vast empire, evolved from ancient peoples who inhabited Mexico and Central America before the birth of Christ. The easiest way to visit the ruins is to charter a small plane for a 1-day trip.

Ranging from 10 to 40 miles off the north coast are several picturesque islands, the largest of which are Guanaja, Roatan, and Utilia. Once the haven of buccaneers and pirates, the islands are now sparsely populated. But the descendants of English settlers are friendly and welcome all visitors. All of the Bay Islands offer lovely scenery, relaxed atmosphere, and good food, especially seafood. They may be reached by scheduled airlines. Tela on the north coast has fine sandy beaches fringed by graceful palms. A reasonably good motel, which is a series of small cottages built around a main reception area, offers accommodations. La Ceiba, another Caribbean port on the north coast, can be reached daily by plane.

Entertainment

Movies are the outside entertainment staple. Movie theaters show recent and old American films with English soundtrack and Spanish subtitles. They

also show some Mexican, Italian, French, and British films. Prices are low, even for first-run movies. A new, air-conditioned, twin-cinema movie theater is in the suburbs, and several comfortable movie theaters are in town. MILGP provides films from the Armed Forces movie circuit. About five movies are shown each week in the Embassy conference room.

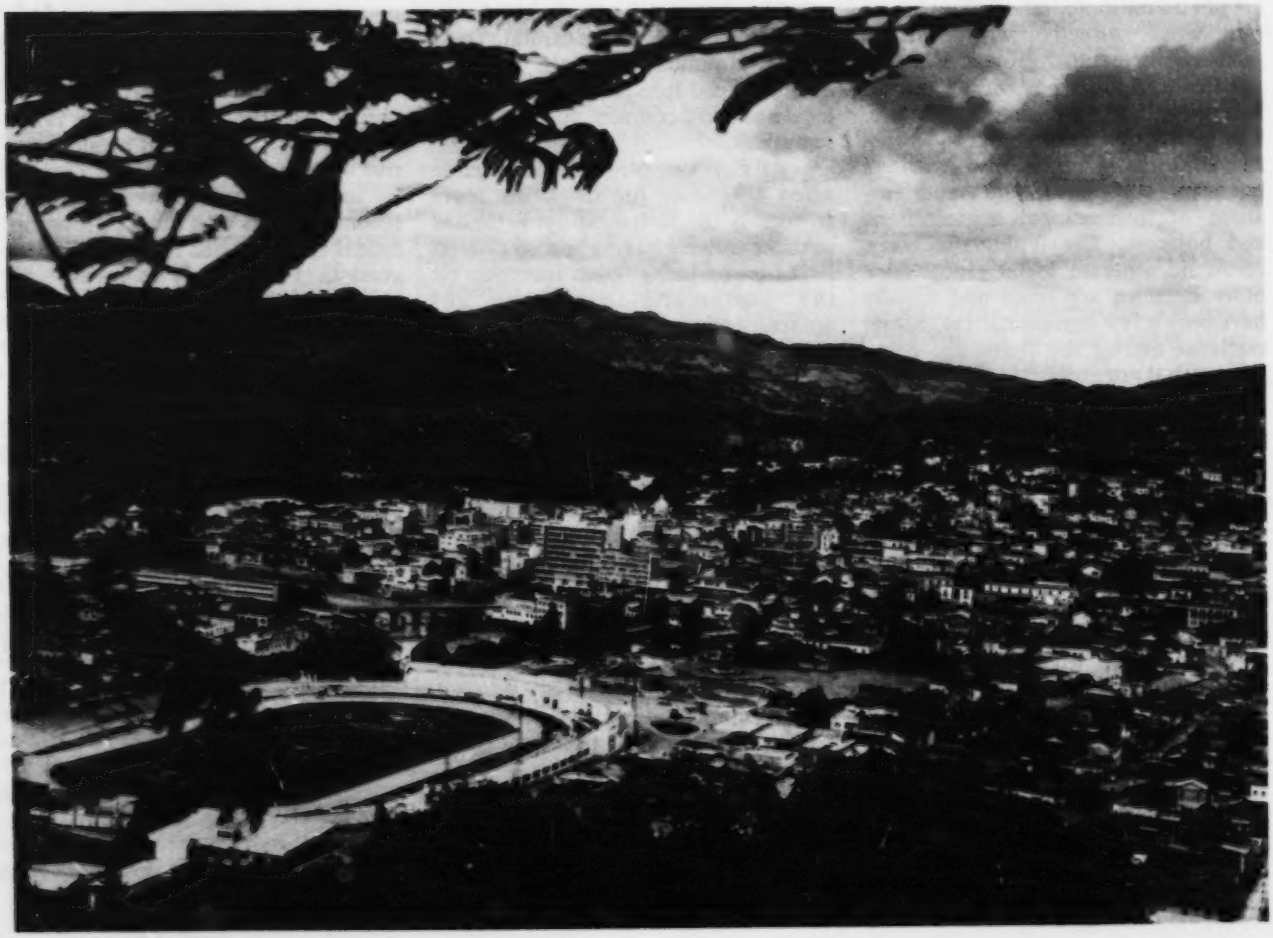
The National School of Fine Arts has showings of local art. Classes are conducted in ceramics, painting, wood carving, and sculpturing. The average cost per class session is $2. Photography is a popular hobby. You can find considerable human interest subject matter as well as panoramic scenes. Most types of film are available, but prices are higher than in the US. Developing service is available locally for black and white, Ektachrome, Kodacolor, and Agfa. Kodacolor film must be sent to the US for processing.

Occasionally cultural attractions are sponsored by the US Government and other country groups. Locally produced concerts, folk festivals, and university plays are also offered. A small cultural society, Sociedad Pro-Arte de Honduras, sponsors 9 to 12 cultural events each year. Plays in English and Spanish are presented by a local dramatic group. This group welcomes Hondurans and members of the international colony. The National University has a theater group which also presents plays in Spanish. Instituto Hondureno de Cultura Interamericana (Binational Center) presents concerts, lectures, and local art shows.

Social Activities

Among Americans. Social life among Americans is active. Embassy officers have many official and unofficial receptions in addition to their own representational entertainment and informal get-togethers. Entertaining is done almost exclusively in the home at dinner parties, cocktail/buffets, receptions, luncheons, bridge parties, and barbecues.

The US Government Women's Association meets three times a year at the DCM's residence to discuss matters of mutual interest to members. The English-Speaking Women's Club of Tegucigalpa is open to any English-speaking woman regardless of nationality and offers an excellent opportunity to meet Hondurans, Americans, and women from other



Panoramic view of Tegucigalpa. National Stadium is in the foreground.

countries. The club offers a monthly entertainment program and a variety of classes such as oil painting, international cooking, discussion groups, bridge, etc.

All American community members may belong to the American Association of Honduras. It sponsors various activities such as a Washington's Birthday observance, Fourth of July picnic, Thanksgiving Day observance, and other functions throughout the year.

Children of all age groups have an active social life. Parents make every effort to get them together for various activities due to the lack of local recreational activities.

Single persons must exercise initiative to maintain a pleasant, well-rounded social life.

International Contacts. Ample opportunity exists for contacts with Hondurans through official channels. Contacts are more limited for persons who are not on the diplomatic list or who do not work directly with various ministries or official groups. But it is possible to find friends and to have an interesting and rewarding social life. The international community includes 21 diplomatic missions, various honorary consulates, and representatives of international organizations and business. The diplomatic corps forms no separate social group since other missions are small and usually have only a few representatives. Social exchange among the diplomatic corps is active but not excessive.

Employees and their spouses may join various activities and organizations to expand their contacts. Embassy officers will find, however, that much of their free time is occupied by official social events. For men, local branches of Rotarians, Junior Chamber of Commerce, Lions International, Knights of Columbus, and Masons are active. American women may work with the Red Cross and Damas Voluntarias at the General Hospital or the Maternal Health Hospital. Churches usually sponsor various charity projects, and the Women's Guild of the Union Church is especially active.

The Funcionarios Diplomaticos is a club for all diplomats under the rank of Ambassador. It sponsors social events such as lunches with guest speakers, picnics, tours, and other activities. The Damas Diplomaticas, composed of the wives of members of the diplomatic corps, has frequent teas and sponsors other social functions.

The number of local acquaintances you maintain will determine the nature of the social life open to you. This in turn depends to a great extent on your knowledge of Spanish.

OFFICIAL FUNCTIONS

Nature of Functions

There are few "must" affairs with the exception of official functions hosted by the Ambassador and DCM. Most officers of all Agencies find it useful to attend as many social functions as possible to establish and maintain contact with residents of the capital. These include Honduran officials, members of the official foreign community, and local and third-country business representatives.

All Embassy officers are invited to a few US-hosted functions. But more frequently the invitation list is limited to those officers having special interest in the group being feted. Inclusion on the diplomatic list does not automatically insure invitations to host government functions or to those hosted by the diplomatic missions. Generally, only heads of agencies and chiefs of section participate in these functions. However, the number of official and unofficial functions to which you are invited depends to a large extent on your success in establishing friendly contact with other residents of the capital.

Standards of Social Conduct

Social conduct for Mission members is based on common courtesy. Responsibilities of American Agency personnel attending official and semiofficial functions hosted by the US, other missions, or the Honduran Government are essentially as outlined in the pamphlet "Diplomatic Social Usage." Protocol at larger host country or third-country functions is normally limited to receiving lines, paying proper respects to the host and hostess on arrival and departure, and speaking with the US Ambassador and spouse and other guests.

An exchange of notes announcing the arrival of persons whose names will appear in the diplomatic list makes it unnecessary to send cards to other diplomatic missions. Officers of all Agencies should bring a minimum of 100 personal cards, 100 "Mr. and Mrs." cards for immediate use, and an ample supply of informals. Calling cards, informals, and invitations may be printed locally at a cost lower than in the US. Some courtesy calls within the Embassy are made by personnel. Cards are left in accordance with prescribed procedure.

Invitations to functions are made by printed formal invitations, by informals, or verbally, depending on the type of function. It is usual for invitations to host government affairs to arrive within only a few days or hours of the function. The Honduran custom of sending flowers or a small gift the first time they are invited to your home is a gracious gesture. They do not expect to be reciprocated.

SPECIAL INFORMATION

Personnel of the Defense Attache Office wear civilian clothes or the short-sleeved summer uniform. The uniform with blouse is required for certain functions. Officer personnel of the Defense Attache Office are required to wear the mess dress uniform on occasion. Enlisted personnel of the Defense Attache Office may wear civilian clothes to the office.

Notes For Travelers

GETTING TO THE POST

If you fly to Tegucigalpa, you may take a Pan Am flight to Guatemala and from there go to Tegucigalpa by SAHSA. You may also make connections with Honduran flights from New Orleans and Miami to Tegucigalpa and from Miami via Air Florida.

Persons traveling by air from the US often take the opportunity to visit other Central American countries by making stopovers in Mexico City, Belize, or Guatemala City. Have the proper visas and passports for all countries to be visited. Central America does not have currency restrictions, and US dollars and travelers checks may be freely exchanged.

You can drive to post from the US. Average driving time from Washington, DC is 12–14 days. Such a trip should be carefully planned. Membership in the AAA is helpful since it will assist in mapping the trip, and AAA officials in Mexico and other Central American countries will help you with border formalities or car trouble. The AAA will arrange for carnets or for special insurance required in certain countries. All main roads are paved and generally are in fair-to-good driving condition. Border crossings and customs inspections are, or have been, relatively easy with proper documentation.

No regularly scheduled passenger ships call at Honduran ports.

Since airfreight and household effects may take some time to arrive, bring the following items in your accompanied baggage: six passport-sized photographs of employee and spouse; two photos of each child over 10 years of age; drivers licenses; insurance papers; and a small supply of calling cards if the employee will be dealing with Honduran or diplomatic counterparts.

Airfreight shipments take about 2–4 weeks to arrive from the US. Locked, banded trunks or other sturdy waterproof containers should be used. Airfreight should contain clothing and household items you might need before your household effects arrive. Although the post has two fully equipped guesthouses and Welcome Kits are available, you may wish to bring some extra household items to fill in before your effects arrive.

Items mailed to post should be routed through the APO. Household effects arrive by ship at Puerto Cortes on the Caribbean coast or by Amapala on the Pacific Coast and are then trucked to Tegucigalpa. Regular shipping service is available from New York, New Orleans, and Miami to Puerto Cortes. Shipments should be marked as follows for Embassy, AID, USICA, and Peace Corps employees:

American Embassy
(Name of Employee)
Tegucigalpa, Honduras

The Embassy commissary is stocked by pooling free-entry items. Individuals or groups are prohibited from ordering shipments of liquor or foodstuffs. Special orders for liquor and foodstuffs may be entered through the commissary at any time.

CUSTOMS, DUTIES, AND PASSAGE

Customs and Duties

The Embassy must request and receive permission for duty-free entry of household effects, automobiles, and unaccompanied baggage. But all personnel of all Agencies are granted initial duty-free entry of their personal effects by the Honduran Government. In practice, such privilege extends to all imports for the full tour of duty.

Passage

Official personnel should not travel on a tourist card. You should have a valid visa and passport. If you drive to post or stop en route, you will need visas and health cards for all countries transited or visited. If driving to post, a valid international drivers license is preferred for travel through Central America. However, a valid US license is acceptable.

If you are coming to post on temporary duty or consultant basis, you will encounter no problems entering the country. Honduras has no stringent travel restrictions. Visiting personnel are billeted in either the Hotel Honduras Maya or the La Ronda Hotel.

Pets

No quarantine or restriction is made on importing pets. But a veterinarian's certificate of rabies vaccination dated within 1 year of arrival and certificate of good health should accompany the pet. Also send one advance copy to the General Services Office stating the type of animal, breed, point of departure, routing, and the date of arrival. This will enable the free-entry permit to be processed prior to the pet's arrival.

FIREARMS AND AMMUNITION

The Honduran Government will issue private permits for .22 caliber rifles and automatic pistols, .22, .32, and .38 caliber revolvers, and shotguns. No other heavier caliber rifles, automatic weapons, sawed-off shotguns, or pistols can be privately registered. Currently no restrictions are placed on the number of weapons of the accepted caliber and type that can be brought into the country and registered. The post recommends, however, that the following restrictions be imposed.

Item	Quantity
Pistols	2
Rifles	2
Shotguns	2
Amunition for above firearms	1,000 rounds

The above-listed firearms and ammunition may be shipped (but not

Honduras-Maya Hotel and swimming pool

mailed) to post without an export license provided they are consigned to US personnel for their personal use and not for resale. A firearms permit is required from the Ministry of Defense after you arrive. Direct any questions concerning importing firearms and/or ammunition into Honduras to the administrative officer at post.

CURRENCY, BANKING, AND WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

The official monetary unit is the lempira, named after an heroic Indian chief who fought against the Spanish conquistadors. It is usually written as L. 1.00 or 1.00 Lps.

Occasionally the shopper will hear Hondurans use "peso." This monetary unit existed before the lempira was adopted and in present use is equivalent to the lempira. This peso is not to be confused with the Central American peso which is written as C.A. $1.00 and is equal to US$1. The Central American peso is a term of reference used by the member governments and regional organizations of the Central American Market.

Lempiras are divided into 100 centavos. Bills, which are a little smaller than US bills, are issued in denominations of 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50, and 100 lempiras. Coins are issued in 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, and 50 centavos pieces as well as the uncommon 1 lempira piece. One, 2, 5, and 10 pieces are copper; the remainder are silver or nickel.

The official exchange rate is US$1 = L.2. The currency has been stable for more than 30 years, and there are no exchange controls. Banking is private although regulated by the Central Bank, an autonomous government institution. Banking facilities are good in the capital and in important population centers.

State, USICA, Peace Corps, and Marine Guard personnel are paid from the Washington Finance Center by US dollar checks sent to the post or through allotments to their banks. AID personnel are paid from the AID/W Centralized Payroll Unit through allotments to their banks. Accommodation exchange is available to American personnel of all agencies. US dollars in limited amounts are available to all American personnel who are traveling outside the country either on official business or leave.

The official system of weights and measures is the metric system. But the US system is the one used most in markets, shops, and gasoline stations. Most mechanics and carpenters are also familiar with US weights and measures.

TAXES, EXCHANGE, AND SALE OF PROPERTY

Restrictions

All personnel pay the indirect tax on imported items. Personal property must be imported for bona fide personal use of employees or their dependents and cannot be imported solely with intent to sell or transfer. Personal effects and household goods are imported duty free in accordance with privileges extended by the Government of Honduras.

At time of departure from post, approval for the sale of cars and personal property at prices in excess of $100 must be obtained from the Sales

Committee before they are sold. Approved sale may be made at the acquisition cost or above acquisition cost. In the latter instance you may not retain any profit. The Sales Committee will recommend proper channels for you to dispose of any profits.

Facilities

Tegucigalpa has three banks affiliated with well-known US banks. These are: Banco Atlantida (Chase Manhattan Bank), Banco de Honduras (First National City Bank), and Bank of America. US dollars and travelers checks may be freely exchanged for lempiras at the rate of L. 2.00 to US $1. Rates fluctuate, so check with the Embassy administrative officer. Banks sell dollar travelers checks that are readily accepted as a medium of exchange by large commercial establishments and hotels. Banks charge a commission of 1% on currency exchange transactions. You may establish lempira accounts for local use. No charge is made to cash-negotiable instruments such as checks and money orders. The 1% fee is charged on all transactions involving dollar purchases.

Embassy staff members are paid their allowances and salaries, after deductions, by US dollars through allotment to their bank. Temporary lodging allowance may be paid locally in lempiras. AID personnel receive their allowances in lempira checks or US dollar checks through allotments to their bank.

RECOMMENDED READING

These titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country. The Department of State does not endorse unofficial publications.

Adams, Richard N. *Cultural Surveys of Panama, Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras*. Pan American Sanitary Bureau: Washington, DC, 1957.

Bancroft, H. H. *History of Central America*. Three volumes.

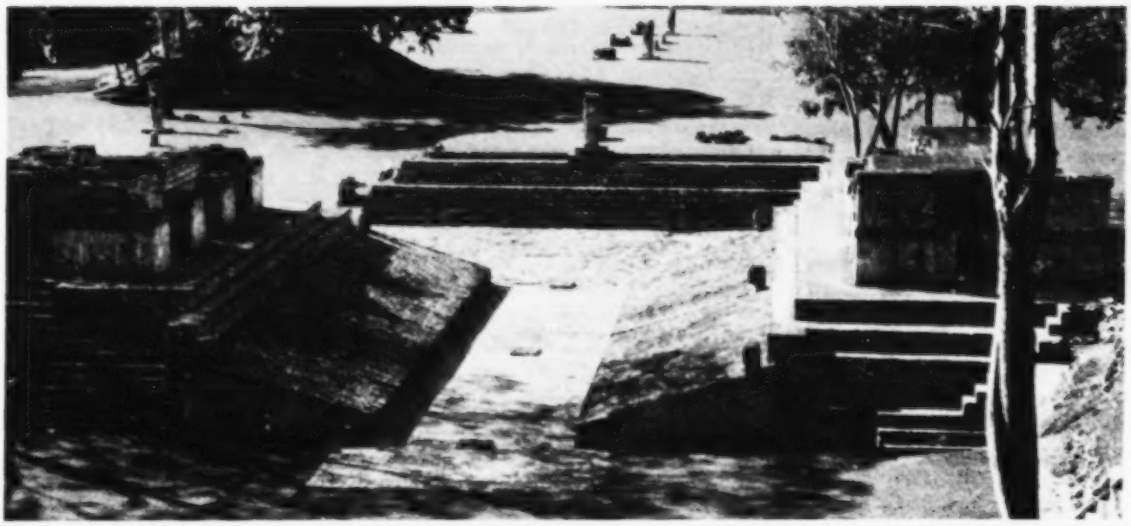
Blutstein, Howard I., et al. *Area Handbook for Honduras*. American University, US Government Printing Office: Washington, DC, 1971.

Chamberlain, R. S. *The Conquest and Colonization of Honduras*. Francisco Morazan: 1950.

Cline, William R., ed., et al. *Economic Integration in Central America*. The Brookings Institution: 1978.

Durham, William H. *Scarcity and Survival in Central America; Ecological Origins of the Soccer War*. Stanford University Press: 1979.

Presidential Palace and Central Bank (top); Parke Central, San Miguel de Heredia in the background (above)



Mayan ruins of Copan

Ferguson, Yale H. *Latin America Area Syllabus*. Department of State: 1979.

Halsell, G. *Getting To Know Guatemala and the Two Honduras*. Coward-McCann: New York, 1966.

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Karnes, Thomas L. *The Failure of Union; Central America 1824-1975*. Arizona State University: 1976.

Kepner, Charles David, Jr. *Social Aspects of the Banana Industry*. AMS Press, Inc.: 1967.

MacLeod, Murdo J. *Spanish Central America; A Socioeconomic History 1520-1720*. University of California Press: 1973.

May, Stacy and Galo Plaza. "A Case Study in United States Business Performance Abroad," in *The United Fruit Company in Latin America*. 1958.

Morley, Sylvanus Griswold. *The Ancient Maya*. Stanford University Press: 1956.

Munro, D.G. *The Five Republics of Central America*. 1918.

Ruhl, Arthur. *The Central Americans*. Charles Scribner's Sons: New York, 1928.

Squier, E. G. *The States of Central America*. New York: 1858.

Stockes, William S. *Honduras; An Area Study in Government*. Greenwood Press: 1973.

Twentieth Century Fund. *Honduras: A Problem in Economic Development*. New York, 1959.

West, Robert C., et al. *Middle America: Its Lands and Peoples*. Prentice-Hall: 1966.

Woodward, Ralph Lee, Jr. *Central America; A Nation Divided*. Oxford University Press: 1976.

Fiction and Travelogs

Johnson, John J. *The Role of the Military in Underdeveloped Countries*. 1962.

Martz, John D. *Central America, Crisis and Challenge*. Chapel Hill, 1959.

Parker, Franklin D. *Travels in Central America 1821-1840*. University of Florida Press: 1970.

Scherzer, Carl. *Travels in the Free States of Central America: Nicaragua, Honduras and San Salvador*. (Two volumes.) AMS Press, Inc.: 1970.

Soltera, Maria. *A Lady's Ride Across Spanish Honduras*. University of Florida Press: 1964.

Stephens, John L. *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatan*. (Two volumes). Dover Publications, Inc.: 1969.

Von Hagen, Victor. *The Ancient Sun Kingdoms of the Americas*.

Wells, William V. *Exploration and Adventures in Honduras*. Harpers: New York, 1857. Spanish edition: Tegucigalpa, 1960.

Most of these books, and others as well, may be borrowed from the Area Studies Collection at post.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

The Embassy is closed on American holidays and the following Honduran holidays. Avoid arriving in Honduras during the week of Easter and at Christmas time, i.e., the week prior to Christmas until after the New Year holiday. At these times nearly all facilities operate on a minimal basis.

New Year's Day	January 1
Holy Thursday	Thursday before Easter
Good Friday	Friday before Easter
Day of the Americas	April 14
Honduran Labor Day	May 1
Independence Day of Central America	September 15
Birthday of General Francisco Morazan	October 3
Discovery of America Day	October 12
Honduran Armed Forces Day	October 21
Christmas Day	December 25

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